



**Connecticut Chapter**  
**National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials**  
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**Testimony of**  
**Neil J. Griffin Jr.**  
**Vice President of Housing and Legislation**  
**Submitted to Housing Committee**  
**March 4, 2010**

Good-afternoon my name is Neil Griffin and I am the Vice President of Housing & Legislation for Conn-NAHRO and the Executive Director of the Glastonbury Housing Authority. Conn-NAHRO represents over 112 Connecticut housing authorities and other non-profit and community development member agencies. Member agencies have the responsibility of effectively managing or administering housing for 150,000 families/individuals and over 62,000 housing units in Connecticut.

Speaking on behalf of Conn-NAHRO's Executive Board and member agencies I would like to express support for: SB 317 and HB5371

I would also like to express Conn-NAHRO's opposition to SB320, SB318 and HB5373.

**SB 317 An Act Concerning Building Located Within the Five-Hundred Year Floodplain**

Conn-NAHRO supports the Housing Committee's efforts to preserve Connecticut's low income housing that was developed within the 500 Year Flood Plain. The proposed exemption will allow existing low income and affordable properties not only to access State funds but federal funds administered by the State, thereby allowing the properties to fund the much needed capital improvements.

We urge the Committee to explore allowing the exemption to any unit on the most current Affordable Housing Appeals List. By changing the language on line 121 from "state housing loan portfolio" to "part of the most current affordable housing appeals list" the Committee will allow for the preservation of a full range of affordable housing, not just the state housing loan portfolio. This would include DECD, CHFA, HUD and Rural Development financed low income and affordable units.

Finally we believe the language on lines 122 – 124 that states "provided such units were built in compliance with the flood map in place at the time of construction" could cause some confusion. Since the units were constructed and building permits were issued at the time of construction the properties would have been in compliance with all zoning requirements including flood plain requirements that were in effect at the time of construction. Therefore we would urge the Committee to consider removing this language.

**HB 5371 An Act Concerning A PILOT Program for Affordable Housing Replacement**

Conn-NAHRO supports HB5371. The concept of allowing properties to be redeveloped without one for one replacement supports the option of redeveloping properties as mixed income properties where some units would be at market rate and others would remain low and moderate income units. Income mixing would take a limited percentage of the units to be rented at market rate thereby reducing the subsidy needs for the property. This would achieve two desired outcomes at one time, the de-concentration of poverty, sought by HUD, and the reduction on subsidy demands sought by all funding sources.

Understandably there is always concern for the loss of a low income or a moderate income housing unit; however if there is a flat out requirement of one for one replacement it could lead to a failure for many plans to rehabilitate dilapidated housing. At a time when property owners are required to leveraging many sources of financing and a there is a clear need to lessen the subsidy demand of each property HB 5371 is a concept worthy of pursuit.

#### HB 5373 An Act Concerning Establishing Residency for Tenants

Conn-NAHRO opposes the language in HB 5373. While we agree the purpose of the bill is a well intended one, without some serious changes to the summary process statutes this bill as proposed would complicate evictions for unauthorized occupants significantly.

We do believe the bill should provide some better clarification, therefore we respectfully submit our comments for your consideration.

Lines 1-3 should be rewritten in a manner not to obstruct an eviction for a situation where an existing tenant adds an unauthorized occupant. By requiring an unauthorized occupant to be on the lease to establish residency it creates a circular logic. This will complicate an eviction by making it more difficult to prove the person has established residence in such unit if it can be argued that they have not established residency since they are not on the lease. We would recommend something to the effect of *"Occupations by a person of a dwelling unit shall be insufficient to provide the right or privilege to occupy such premise unless (1)..."*

Line 4 should probably say, *"unless... (2) such person qualifies as a dependent under the Internal Revenue Code."* and should also add: *"...or a natural child of a tenant of such unit under the age of majority."*

Line 5-6 his should probably say, *"Any person who occupies a dwelling unit but does not establish residence pursuant to (1) or (2) above shall be considered, for the purposes of CGS §47a-23(a)(2) and (3), someone who never had a right or privilege to occupy such premises; or who may have originally had the right or privilege to occupy such premises but such right or privilege has terminated."*

#### SB 320 An Act Concerning The Selection of Tenant Commissioners

Conn-NAHRO opposes SB 320. Presently the Connecticut General Statutes provide a mechanism that allows for recommendations to be submitted by tenant associations. Furthermore the burden of oversight of the Authority rests with the appointing municipal authority. To remove their ability to select members of the commission, for which they have the ultimate oversight of, removes a core principal of accountability. Finally the bill creates an unfunded mandate; the cost of holding an election would ultimately be incurred by the Authority or municipality.

SB 318 An Act Concerning Changes to Certain Housing Statutes

Conn-NAHRO opposes the language in SB318 which essentially removes the Housing Sustainability Committee. We would like to see some language that would place the Housing Committee as the oversight committee in conjunction with some appointed housing practitioners keeping with the spirit of the existing statute.

